

“TRIPLE CROWN 2016”

STORY AND PHOTOS BY STEVE HEUERTZ (UNLESS NOTED)

ONE YEAR AFTER AMERICAN PHAROAH'S TRIUMPHANT SWEEP OF THE TRIPLE CROWN, THE SERIES BEGAN ANEW WITH THOUGHTS AND HOPES THAT ANOTHER COULD BECOME THE "AFFIRMED" TO AMERICAN PHAROAH'S "SEATTLE SLEW." HERE IS A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY CHRONICLING THE EVENTS OF THE 2016 TRIPLE CROWN.

Kentucky Derby (G1)

Louisville, Kentucky - Churchill Downs - May 7, 2016
Race 12 - For Three-Year-Olds - 1 1/4 Miles on Dirt
\$2,000,000 Guaranteed (Available Money \$2,391,600)
Horse: Nyquist, Bay Colt, by Uncle Mo out of Seeking Gabrielle, by Forestry.
Foaled March 10, 2013 in Kentucky
Breeder: Summerhill Farm; Owner: Reddam Racing, LLC
Trainer: Doug O'Neill; Jockey: Mario Gutierrez



Top left to right: -The Triple Crown officially starts with the post position draw for 142nd Kentucky Derby. The Derby trophy is on display as a full field of 20 horses (and two also eligibles) are entered in

the race. Nyquist is installed as the 3-1 favorite from post 13. Exaggerator is the second choice at 8-1 with Creator listed at 10-1.

-NBC's Kenny Rice interviews Doug O'Neill during the post position broadcast. Nyquist's trainer aims for his second Kentucky Derby win. O'Neill won the 2012 edition with I'll Have Another.

-The undefeated, Breeders' Cup Juvenile winner and Eclipse winning Juvenile Champion Male, Nyquist, gallops at Churchill Downs two days before the Derby. Nyquist became consensus favorite after his dominating win in the Florida Derby (G1) over the previously unbeaten, Mohaymen.

-Nyquist poses after his morning bath. The talented colt trained brilliantly prior to the race, yet some wondered if his pedigree would allow him to "get" the 1 1/4 mile Derby distance.

-The rose and lily are the iconic, respective flowers of the Kentucky Derby and Kentucky Oaks.

-Eventual Preakness winner, Exaggerator, and Belmont Stakes winner, Creator, school in the Churchill paddock on "Thurby" (the Thursday before the Derby).

-The Kentucky Derby jockey statue is painted in the silk colors of Zayat Stables' 2015 Triple Crown winner, American Pharoah.

-Cathryn Sophia (far right) takes the "Lilies for the Fillies" as she rolls to victory in the 142nd Kentucky Oaks. Nyquist's stablemate, Land Over Sea (far left), finishes second. (Ryan Thompson)





-2015 Breeders' Cup Mile winner, Tepin, and Julien Leparoux win the Distaff Turf Mile (G2) on the Derby undercard. With her sixth consecutive win, Tepin furthered her case as one of the best horses in racing. *(Ryan Thompson)*

-Nyquist departs his barn and walks the Churchill backstretch less than an hour before the Derby. His forelock and mane are curled in the traditional race-day fashion for a Doug O'Neill trainee.

-167,227 fans in attendance watch 20 horses make the emotional walkover to be saddled for the "Greatest Two Minutes in Sports." The crowd was second largest in Derby history.

-Anticipation builds as the start of the Derby nears.

-Mario Guittierrez and Nyquist walk in the post parade during a chorus of "My Old Kentucky Home." *(Ryan Thompson)*

-A thunderous roar, the bell sounds, the gates fly open and they're off in the Kentucky Derby! *(Ryan Thompson)*

-Danzing Candy leads the cavalry charge under the Twin Spires with Nyquist in second. Danzing Candy sets blazing fractions of 1/4 mile in 22.58, 1/2 mile in 45.72, 3/4 mile in 1:10.40 and a mile in 1:35.61. Nyquist held just off the hot pace throughout the opening mile.

- The field barrels around the clubhouse turn.



Eventual second place finisher, Exaggerator (green silks) races well off the fast pace and near the back of the pack. The fast pace sets the race up perfectly for the deep closing Exaggerator.

-Despite racing near the grueling pace, Nyquist strikes the front as he exits the final turn.

Deep in the stretch Exaggerator and Kent Desormeaux (green silks) attempt to run down Nyquist, but the champ and Mario Guittierrez refuse to let them pass. The Derby marked the fourth time the undefeated Nyquist beat Exaggerator. *(Ryan Thompson)*

KENTUCKY DERBY 2016



-Crossing the finish in an impressive time of 2:01.31, Mario Gutierrez celebrates aboard Nyquist as the pair romps to victory in the 142nd Kentucky Derby! Amazingly, Gutierrez wins his second Derby in as many starts with the prior occurring on the aforementioned I'll Have Another.

-Nyquist's connections celebrate their second Kentucky Derby victory. Mario Gutierrez, Doug O'Neill and owner J. Paul Reddam teamed up previously in 2012 with I'll Have Another.

-Nyquist wears his new garland after winning "The Run for the Roses" and remaining unde-

feated in eight career starts.

-Nyquist leaves the winner's circle and targets his next goal. In exactly two weeks he will contest the second jewel of the Triple Crown, the Preakness Stakes. *(Ryan Thompson)*

Preakness Stakes (G1)

Baltimore, Maryland - Pimlico - May 21, 2016 - Race 13
For Three-Year-Olds - 1 3/16 Miles on Dirt - \$1,500,000 Guaranteed
Horse: Exaggerator, Dark Bay or Brown Colt, by Curlin out of Dawn
Raid, by Vindication. Foaled February 5, 2013 in Kentucky
Breeder: Joseph B. Murphy
Owner: Big Chief Racing, LLC, Head of Plains Partners, LLC,
Rocker O Ranch, LLC et al.
Trainer: Keith Desormeaux; Jockey: Kent Desormeaux



-The Triple Crown leaves Louisville, Kentucky and moves to Baltimore, Maryland and the home turf of 10-year-old, Ben's Cat. The amazing gelding split horses and rallied late to win his fourth consecutive Jim McKay Turf Sprint on the Black-Eyed Susan undercard, the day before the Preakness.
-Go Maggie Go rebounds after a fourth place finish in the Kentucky Oaks two weeks earlier and wins the Black-Eyed Susan (G2) at Pimlico.
-It's all smiles for the connections of Go Maggie Go after she won a garland of Black-Eyed Susan's.
-Nyquist munches on some hay and appears comfortably settled in at Pimlico. The undefeated colt came out of the Derby in good health and was installed as the 3-5 morning line favorite for the Preakness.
-J. Paul Reddam and Doug O'Neill on set with NBC Sports Network. The owner and trainer were confident Nyquist could follow up his Derby victory in similar order at the Preakness.
-Jockey's watch the races at "Old Hilltop" from the jock's room balcony.



-It's all about the Derby winner at the Preakness. An artist works on two paintings of Nyquist in the Pimlico infield.
-The Woodlawn Vase awaits it's newest recipient. The prized trophy, valued in excess of \$4,000,000, is guarded while displayed on the Pimlico cupola.
-Much like the one at Churchill Downs, a jockey sits outside the Preakness barn, honoring the previous year's winner, American Pharoah.
-The Preakness nears. Exaggerator and Nyquist renew their rivalry for the fifth time and make

the walkover from the stakes barn to the track. After his second place finish to Nyquist in the Kentucky Derby, Exaggerator is once again made the second betting choice on the morning line at 3-1.
-Nyquist walks on the Pimlico Turf course prior to the start of the Preakness. The weather was cool and rainy most of the day.
-Rain continues to fall as Exaggerator and Kent Desormeaux walk in the post parade. The weather left the track listed as sloppy and much to liking of Exaggerator, who dominated in the

slop when winning the Santa Anita Derby (G1) six weeks earlier.
-After breaking from the gate, Mario Gutierrez hustles Nyquist to the lead in the Preakness. The colt sizzles through the slop and sets the fastest opening 1/4 mile in Preakness history at 22.38. Uncle Lino battle Nyquist on the lead throughout 1/2 mile in 46.56, 3/4 mile in 1:11.97 and 1 mile in 1:38.19. But the pace was so fast on such a sloppy track, and again the race set up perfectly for the closing Exaggerator, who raced closer to the lead compared to the Derby.

PREAKNESS STAKES 2016



-Exaggerator shows once again how much he loves the slop as he bounces past a tiring Nyquist. While never catching Nyquist in four previous starts, Exaggerator finally defeats his rival and wins the 141st Preakness Stakes almost effortlessly.

-Winning any Triple Crown race floods the victor with overwhelming emotion and a sense of accomplishment seldom offered elsewhere.

-Kent Desormeaux raises his hand in victory as he and Exaggerator are escorted to the Preakness winner's circle.

-The stunning Exaggerator appeared as if he had energy to spare after his easy victory in the Preakness.

-A soaking-wet Exaggerator is draped in the garland of Black-Eyed Susan's as Desormeaux reminds everyone who was number one on this day.

-After a second and first place finish in the first two legs of the Triple Crown, Exaggerator is ready for the third and final stop, the Belmont Stakes.

-Kent's older brother and Exaggerator's trainer, Keith Desormeaux, hoists the replica Woodlawn Vase given to the connections of the Preakness winner.

-The Pimlico cupola weather vane is immediately painted in the colors of Exaggerator after his victory in the Preakness.



-The biggest day in New York racing featured an amazing ten stakes including six Grade 1's. Carina Mia gets things going as she wins the Acorn (G1), defeating Kentucky Oaks winner, Cathryn Sophia, and Black-Eyed Susan winner, Go Maggie Go, in the process.

Belmont Stakes (G1)

Elmont, New York - Belmont Park - June 11, 2016 - Race 11
 For Three-Year-Olds - 1 1/2 Miles on Dirt - \$1,500,000 Guaranteed
 Horse: Creator, Gray or Roan Colt, by Tapit out of Morena (PER),
 by Privately Held. Foaled March 30, 2013 in Kentucky
 Breeder: Mt. Brilliant Broodmares I, LLC
 Owner: WinStar Farm, LLC and Bobby Flay
 Trainer: Steve Asmussen, Jockey: Irad Ortiz, Jr.

-An outsider and his charge overlook Belmont Stakes day festivities.

-In one of the best performances of the year Frosted wins the Metropolitan Handicap (aka Met Mile) (G1) by 14 1/4 length in a stakes record time of 1:32.73. Frosted finished second to Triple Crown winner, American Pharoah, in the 2015 Belmont Stakes.

-While there wouldn't be a Triple Crown in 2016, the massive Belmont Park grandstand remained packed with fans eagerly awaiting the "Test of the Champion."

-The excitement of watching your horse win on Belmont Stakes Day.

-The now twelve Triple Crown winner's are honored in the Belmont infield.

-The Belmont gate crew awaits the starters for the Manhattan Handicap (G1).

-The sensational, world-class turf star, Flintshire, wins the Manhattan Handicap (G1). Flintshire is likely the best American Turf horse in racing at distances greater than one mile.





-The Belmont Stakes field loads into the starting gate. Exaggerator (stall 11) patiently awaits Creator to load in the far outside post.

-And they're off in the Belmont Stakes! Creator breaks last of all and settles to run comfortably near the back of the pack for the majority of the 1 1/2 mile trip.

-Clouds move over Belmont Park. The weather was beautiful all day but the forecast called for possible rain near post time for the Belmont Stakes.
-With the defection of Nyquist from the Belmont Stakes (the Derby winner spiked a fever shortly after the Preakness), Exaggerator was made the 9-5 favorite while his fellow Derby contender, Creator (who skipped the Preakness), was listed at 10-1. Exaggerator and Creator make the walk under the grandstand and onto the giant Belmont oval.

-Similar to the Preakness, Kent Desoreaux and Exaggerator stay closer to the lead. However, this time the track wasn't sloppy and it appeared to be much less to Exaggerator's liking. Meanwhile, Creator's stable-mate, Gettysburg, set a reasonable pace with 1/4 mile in 24.09, 1/2 mile in 48.48, 3/4 mile in 1:13.38 and 1 mile in 1:37.96.





BELMONT STAKES 2016

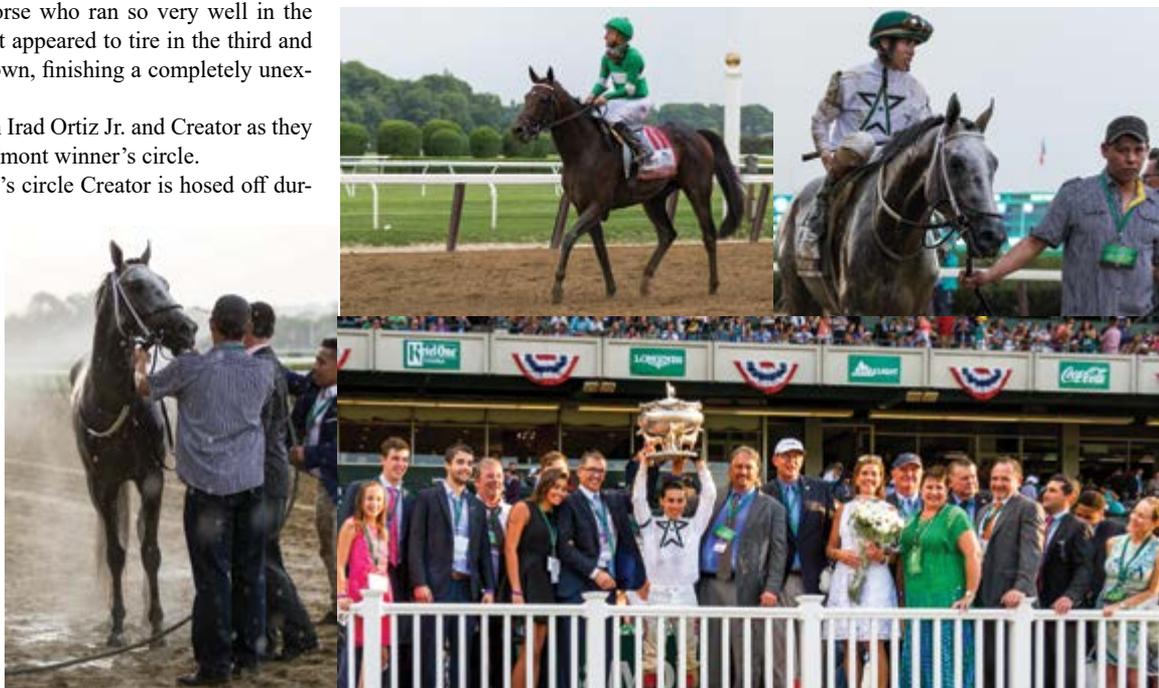
-Rounding the far turn Exaggerator lay four wide yet within striking distance of the lead. Creator moved on the inside beside Exaggerator before splitting Governor Malibu and Stradivari. Exaggerator struggled and began falling further back. Destin took the lead in deep stretch but Creator kept grinding until the two hit the wire in a photo finish. Irad Ortiz Jr. raised his whip in victory, knowing he had caught Destin in the final stride. The results were confirmed. Creator won by the smallest of margins, a nose over the very game Destin.

-Kent Desormeaux and Exaggerator are disappointed in the outcome. The gallant horse who ran so very well in the Derby and Preakness, just appeared to tire in the third and final leg of the Triple Crown, finishing a completely unexpected 11th.

-The rain begins to fall on Irad Ortiz Jr. and Creator as they make their way to the Belmont winner's circle.

-After leaving the winner's circle Creator is hosed off during a surreal moment of falling rain with shimmers of sunlight sneaking between the clouds above.

-Creator's connections celebrate above the Belmont winner's circle. Irad Ortiz Jr. hoists the Belmont Stakes trophy with trainer, Steve Assmusen (blue shirt), by his side and WinStar Owner, Elliot Walden (white hat), next to Steve.





-The Triple Crown ended with three different horses winning each race. While no Triple Crown was won, the rain passed over Belmont Park and left a lone rainbow, hovering in the sky. At the end of the rainbow were the painted silks of Zayat Stables, underneath a gazebo in the Belmont infield. After the Kentucky Derby many believed the undefeated Nyquist had the potential to win the Triple Crown, but the subsequent weeks reminded us of how difficult the task remains and how special one must be to accomplish it. One year earlier, American Pharoah was exactly that, a treasure for all of racing, far greater than any pot of gold.



AMERICAN PHAROAH

Steve Heuertz Bio

It started with a horse named Cowboy. Disregarded and discounted, this nine-year-old Red Dun Quarter Horse left his life as a ranch horse in South Dakota and ventured a new path into the life of Steve Heuertz in 2004.

Shortly thereafter, a bond was formed that fully catapulted Steve into the world of the horse where he became fascinated with the wonderful capabilities of this majestic animal. Of particular interest were the speed, endurance and competitive spirit demonstrated by the equine heroes within the sport of Thoroughbred Racing. Although initially satisfied with observing from afar, Steve became increasingly captivated by the sport and turned toward capturing the splendor of racing via his other passion, photography. The result was a recipe where he could combine his great love for horses, racing and photography into one harmonious blend that was greater than the sum of its parts.

Since then, racing has taken Steve across the country to such wonderful places as Saratoga Race Course, Churchill Downs, Santa Anita Park, Pimlico Race Course, Belmont Park, Keeneland and Hooiser Park. During these travels, Steve has been fortunate to witness and photograph equally wonderful races such as the Kentucky Derby, Preakness Stakes and Belmont Stakes (racing's famed Triple Crown) as well as the Travers Stakes, Santa Anita Derby, Indiana Derby, Stephen Foster Handicap and Breeders' Cup, among others. However, residing in the Chicago suburb of St. Charles, IL, Steve regularly frequents Arlington Park and Hawthorne Race Course where he has enjoyed capturing magnificent races like the Arlington Million and Hawthorne Gold Cup. Today, Steve's passion for horses, racing and photography is like a fire that continues to be stoked. While either behind the lens capturing the thrill of a Grade 1 race or in the saddle loping around a field with Cowboy, Steve has learned to operate under the simple truth that the more he is able to involve the horse in his life, the happier his days become.

Steve Heuertz;
Steve's horse and
loyal friend, Cowboy, a
20-year-old, Red Dun
Quarter Horse

